

## WASHINGTON STATE BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES

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*DATE: October 14, 2004*

*TIME: 9:00 a.m.*

*PLACE: NRB Room 172*

*Olympia, Washington*

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### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brad Ack	Puget Sound Action Team
Kate Benkert	US Fish & Wildlife Service
Bill Brookreson	Department of Agriculture
Bonnie Bunning	Department of Natural Resources
Maggie Coon	The Nature Conservancy
Donna Darm	NOAA Fisheries
Rob Fimbel	State Parks
Jeff Koenings	Department of Fish & Wildlife
Mel Moon	Quileute Tribe
Jackie Reid	Thurston County Conservation District
Ken Risenhoover	Port Blakely Tree Farm
Mark Schaffel	Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association
Kate Stenberg	At-large
Naki Stevens	People for Puget Sound
Wade Troutman	Foster Creek Conservation District
Dick Wallace	Department of Ecology
Steve West	University of Washington
Megan White	Department of Transportation

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### **OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Carole Richmond, staff member at the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), opened the initial meeting of the Washington State Biodiversity Council. She introduced Dee Frankfourth, the contractor who has been retained to facilitate the Council's first three meetings and Carol Jolly.

Carol Jolly, Deputy Director, Governor's Executive Policy office, welcomed the Council on behalf of Governor Gary Locke. She thanked Council members for their participation. She said it was important to focus on nature as a whole, rather than on its individual parts. She said the biodiversity effort has tremendous potential to affect the course of our state and would complement other initiatives in the Governor's Office: the outcome-based budget planning effort known as "Priorities of Government", the sustainability advisory panel, and the panel on global climate change. She noted that "environmentalism" as both a movement and an issue is being marginalized. It has been viewed as a discrete entity, rather than something fundamental that affects each of our lives. It is not high on the agenda of "everyday people," and this must change if biodiversity is to be conserved. An effort must be made to raise public awareness and engage stakeholders. She closed by urging the Council to be creative and assertive in overcoming barriers.

Dee asked Council members and members of the audience to introduce themselves. She asked Council members to identify what they thought of as the major threat to biodiversity. As a whole, the members identified the following threats:

- Development and conversion of habitat;
- Expanding population, consumption;
- Attitudes of indifference and self-centeredness;
- Lack of public awareness;
- Climate change;
- Short-term thinking; and
- Habitat fragmentation and fragmentation of thinking.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

Norm Johnson, Dept. of Forest Resources, OSU

“Biodiversity Conservation: Developing Good-Hearted Policies for a Changing and Unpredictable World”

Professor Johnson shared “lessons learned” from his experiences with regional conservation efforts in Oregon. He believes it is important for the public to be able to visualize future outcomes and to help shape the direction they want to pursue, rather than for agencies to just talk about outcomes or show data. Maps are an excellent low-cost way to illustrate the problem and identify policy issues. He believes a statewide projection of future development is needed and that such information should be available on a webpage accessible to the public. He believes that projections should address climate change, and other uncertainties. This “alternative futures” exercise will also help in the development of indicators. He added that it was important to not be gloomy about the future, but to highlight positive accomplishments and give people hope. In many cases, the catalyst for action is the knowledge that change is needed, rather than financial incentives. He said that the efforts he has been involved in have floundered in the implementation change. He said the Council should establish a scientific committee and ensure that the business community is on board. [A copy of the handout for Professor Johnson’s PowerPoint presentation is attached.]

Sara Vickerman, Defenders of Wildlife, Portland

“Perspectives on biodiversity conservation planning,” PowerPoint presentation

Sara Vickerman is the West Coast Director of Defenders of Wildlife, a national wildlife conservation organization. Like Professor Johnson, Sara also talked about “lessons learned” in the context of biodiversity conservation. She talked briefly about the project she headed up – the Oregon Biodiversity Project – a statewide effort like Washington’s that was developed between 1993 and 1998. She illustrated the scope of change in Oregon by comparing a historic vegetation map to present vegetation cover. She noted that Oregon’s effort included “working landscapes” (farms and forests), as well as a ranking of public lands for its contribution to biodiversity. In developing this strategy, she was always careful to say that it was not a “reserve-based strategy,” but also included other low intensity land uses. Since completion of the strategy, she has helped

pass three incentive bills through the Oregon legislature. She hopes the Oregon Progress Board will develop a benchmark for landcover, and she said better integration was needed between terrestrial and aquatic conservation efforts. She then reviewed a number of similar statewide conservation efforts in other states across the nation.

Joe LaTourrette, Manager – Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, WDFW  
“The Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy,” PowerPoint presentation

Joe reviewed the comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy that he is developing on behalf of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The plan will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in order to maintain Washington’s eligibility for “state wildlife grants.” These funds were made available to the states and territories as a result of negotiations in Congress a few years ago for funding for non-game species [background is available on <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/cwcs/>]. The completed strategy will be based on existing state species plans and on an ecoregional approach. The strategy will be submitted to the USFWS by October of 2005.

During lunch, a slide presentation on the biodiversity of Washington (“From Whales to Wolves: A Visual Journey across Washington”) was given by Elizabeth Gray of The Nature Conservancy, along with John Gamon (DNR) and Elizabeth Rodrick (WDFW).

## **COUNCIL ORGANIZATION**

Council member Peter Goldmark joined the meeting by conference call.

Carole reviewed the recommendations from the August 16, 2004 memo that was sent to council members.

The subject of meeting frequency was discussed. The options are to either meet quarterly or bi-monthly. Brad Ack noted that the group should first decide what they want to do before they decide how often to meet. No decision was made on meeting frequency.

Carole gave an overview of the proposed budget. Total funding for FY2005 is \$195,000. (See notebook for more information.)

## **INITIAL SCOPE OF WORK**

Discussed elements of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and ways to develop an initial scope of work.

Maggie Coon reviewed how the strategy was developed and noted that the Executive Order is a good charge in capturing both the high level mandate (30 years) and specific, more project-oriented goals. She feels there is a need for early focus on pilot projects to see progress. We shouldn’t rule out possibility of identifying a real gap.

Naki Stevens would like the Council to develop an overall framework.  
Public education – they are looking to us for creative K-12 biodiversity education.

Brad – Concerned with spending a lot of time and energy on a 30-year comprehensive plan. Have a lot of plans, useful for us to look at them and see what else needs to be done. We should focus on action-oriented pilot programs, counties working on GMA updates, find counties to help get pilot programs going.

Bill – We should identify which projects are working.

Jeff – Lot of ongoing processes, like Ecoregional Assessments. May not have to reinvent the wheel. Take what's already there – weave it all together to make a comprehensive strategy. Look at what are the various pieces, filling the gaps.

Naki – Agreed with Jeff - look at what's already been done. Identify the vision and the goal and how to measure progress.

Bill – Agrees with pilot projects. Need programs and practices that support biodiversity - programs that can be utilized.

Bonnie – Make it relevant to people. She likes the on-the-ground work – challenging to make it meaningful to people.

Steve W – Sustainable and in-perpetuity doesn't jive with 30 yrs. Encouraged doing a pilot project.

Carole – In looking at the Puget Sound region, especially King Co., there are a lot of conservation efforts going on now. Invite people who are working on these projects. Maybe focus on Thurston, Lewis and Clark Counties.

Jeff – Need to get to the point of fulfilling the charges – form subcommittees to get together and bring back options. We know what the charge is. Let's get to the part of who's going to do it.

Kate S – We need to do visioning, planning, see what's already been done.

Brad – Overriding criteria should be relevance. Enormous effort and money going into salmon recovery.

Mark – Shellfish projects are in the works, mesh commercial interest with biodiversity interests.

Bill – Don't start off trying to fix an entire ecoregion. Need to see early results. Small enough to be doable.

Robert – Let's not lose site of short-term projects. Devote today to defining a vision.

Bonnie – Pilot projects wouldn't necessarily come up with brand new, we could work with existing. Salmon recovery project could be broad instead of single species.

Naki – Need to consult with the public to get ideas – public scoping of Eastern and Western WA to get some enthusiasm and energy from community contacts.

Donna – What's already going isn't knit together with a landscape scale. This is a unique effort.

Jackie – Need to do vision and goal so we can explain ourselves to others – general public could misunderstand what we are about. Liked idea of having people-proposed projects, better success. Landscape projects are difficult to pull together, maybe divide into smaller parts. Crucial to not have misunderstandings in the beginning. How are the pilot projects going to be funded?

Megan – Liked tapestry concept. Where does a pilot project take us?

Mel – This is a learning experience. Not a lot of inference to tribal interest in Report. Don't leave tribes out, make sure they fit into process. Pilots are good idea, need to do more.

Jeff proposed the group form subcommittees. One could work on idea of staffing, manager, structure. Another could work on mission and goals. Another on the scoping process. Another dealing with public education. Then bring back their recommendations to next council meeting.

Bill – Another subcommittee to look into what the pilot projects might be.

Robert – Not quite sure we're ready to break into subcommittees until we're all on the same page. Need to meet soon to begin the visioning exercise, so we can get ourselves out of the starting blocks.

Dee suggested the group take care of a few procedural items.

Donna Darm moved to adopt the Robert's Rules of Order. Maggie Coon seconded. Motion passed.

Megan White moved to adopt Resolution #2004-01 Travel and Meeting Expense Reimbursement. Dick Wallace seconded. There was discussion over whether to include other members of public, not just non-governmental members. The resolution was amended to read "the Biodiversity Council hereby approves reimbursement of travel and meeting expenses for non-governmental members and other members of the public that serve in official capacity on the council". The Council voted to approve the resolution as amended.

Carole – We need to submit bylaws concerning meeting frequency, process, structure, roles and responsibilities, chairperson's duties, role of project manager, public involvement.

Jeff – Made a motion to form two subcommittees - one to look at structure of council and bylaws, and another subcommittee to work on mission statement or goals, scoping process, and public involvement. Bring findings back to council in December. Bill Brookreson seconded the motion and also moved to break the motion down into two parts, one for each subcommittee. Discussion on the motion followed.

Donna – Not sure tasks require a subcommittee. Maybe Carole could provide a standard set of bylaws.

Jeff – Not just bylaws – there are other issues we need to deal with, such as are we going to hire a project manager? Do we want a scientist? Some way of getting through the myriad of approaches and ideas and actually make some recommendations. Mission and goals, the whole scoping process.

Wade – Would like subcommittee reports distributed to the whole Council at least a week before the council meeting.

Maggie – Bylaws include description of Chair(s). Would this subcommittee make recommendation of Chair(s)?

Jeff – The subcommittee would recommend how to choose a Chair. It would then go through the nomination process.

Robert – As far as composition of staff, not sure where we're going. We should have some idea of what we need first.

Jeff – We already have a discrete set of charges in the EO; we need to deal with the elements, such as whether we need an executive director or project manager to get these jobs done. We need to have something before us to get started.

Brad – Likes scoping of public involvement and breaking down the work, but not sure the mission and goals needs to go to a subcommittee. The EO charge is the mission of our group.

Jeff – The idea was it's hard to get going on specifics without mission and goals statement. Idea is to come back with something that reflects what we've been charged with put into a concise statement. Back to the council to form the real direction.

Brad – Rather take a more detailed list to the public, with projects, etc. Mission statement not relevant. Spend too much valuable time on this. Take goals set by Governor and have subcommittee help us think through the options. Wants to get to the work.

Bonnie – Not sure about taking vision statement to public.

Naki – Statement of work should include recommendation of process for putting the strategy together - planning process that includes timeline or roadmap and how we are going to proceed with public involvement.

Robert – Cautioned not to bury the subcommittee. As we get more into the details of the mission, goals, and statement of work, that may be more than the subcommittee would be prepared to handle. The specifics could be addressed at a third meeting.

Naki – Need to be clear on public involvement.

Jeff – Have the subcommittee come up with operating procedures relative to public involvement.

Naki – Should not limit public involvement to just meeting the guidelines.

Ken – What about the landowner input? Looks like a top down, regulatory process.

Bill – Be judicious about public involvement. Sees no value in getting feedback on mission, goals and vision. Public is a very valuable resource – get them involved in something substantive.

Dee – Let's move forward to establish these committees.

Brad – Let's see who is willing to sign up.

Donna – Set up meeting dates first, then those who can attend on those dates could attend.

Steve – Don't need a lot of face-to-face meetings – easier and quicker to use email, phone, etc.

The council voted to approve the motion to form an adhoc subcommittee to come up with recommendations on composition of staff, structure of council, and to refine and develop bylaws. Members of this subcommittee are Bill Brookreson, Maggie Coon, Mel Moon, and Donna Darm.

The council also voted to approve the motion to form an adhoc subcommittee to define mission and goals, scope of work, and public involvement process. Members of this subcommittee are Bonnie Bunning, Kate Stenberg, Jeff Koenings, Naki Stevens, Robert Fimbel, Jackie Reid, and Maggie Coon.

Carole will get the groups organized - info will go out to whole council.

Jeff Koenings made a motion to move the date of the next Council meeting to December. Bill Brookreson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Wade – Reports from the subcommittees must be delivered at least one week before Council meeting.

Naki – For the next meeting, would like to see a list of the numerous plans that exist on this subject and planning processes that are underway, in an interest to jump start the assessment portion of the planning process.

Brad – More time for discussion – don't overload meeting with presentations.

Jeff – Due to a potential weather issue in December, best to have the meeting in Olympia.

Dick – Future meetings around the state as time goes on.

Went around the table with each member giving brief closing comments.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

**Next meeting: December (place and date to be announced)**